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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ASUNCION 001343

SIPDIS

BUENOS AIRES FOR AGCOUNSELOR:RHOFF
USDA FOR FAS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAGR PA](#)

SUBJECT: COUNTRY CLEARANCE FOR REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL
COUNSELOR ROBERT HOFF, AND AGRICULTURAL SPECIALIST FRANCISCO
PIROVANO

REF: BUENOS AIRES 002573

1. Per reftel, country clearance is granted for Regional
Agricultural Counselor Robert Hoff (Security clearance: top
secret), and Agricultural Specialist Francisco Pirovano

SIPDIS

(LES), for travel to Asuncion during the period of November
7-9, 2005 for the purpose of meeting with GOP animal health
officials to discuss USDA's soybean rust project
implementation with public and private sectors, and to meet
with Embassy officials. The contact officer for the visit
is Economic and Commercial Counselor Patrick O'Reilly,
office tel.: (595/21) 213-715, Ext. 2015. Home tel.:
(595/21) 612-758.

2. Per paragraph 2 of reftel, no Embassy assistance is
required.

3. Due to budget constraints, post will only provide airport
expediter for initial arrival and final departure of
employees assigned to post, as well as for senior officials.
Other travelers requiring special assistance should request
an expediter in advance and provide fiscal data. Taxis are
available from the airport. A taxi ride from the airport to
your hotel may cost you anywhere from 45,000 to 60,000
guaranies, approximately 8 to 10 USD.

4. All U.S. citizens traveling to Paraguay are now required
to have visas. Airport and border visas are not available
at this time. Please contact the Paraguayan Embassy or
closest Consulate for more information, especially if you
require a multiple entry visa.

5. If travel plans involve visiting neighboring countries in
the region, please arrive with appropriate visas and obtain
country clearances from the appropriate U.S. Embassies.
Brazil and Argentina requires visas for official travelers
on diplomatic, official, and/or personal passports.
Official visitors contemplating travel to Iguazu Falls
should advise the Embassy before doing so as well as Embassy
Brasilia and/or Embassy Buenos Aires if they plan to cross
into Brazil and Argentina. Travelers are reminded that
Iguazu Falls is located on the border of Brazil and
Argentina, about ten miles east of Ciudad del Este,
Paraguay, and that travelers from Paraguay cross into
Brazil.

6. Post recommends that even though you will be only
transiting Brazil, you also obtain a Brazilian visa. If the
airline cancels or delays its flight to Asuncion, then you
may have to stay in Sao Paulo for one day while waiting for
the next available flight to Asuncion. Brazilian authorities
will not permit you to leave the airport to go to a hotel
without a valid Brazilian visa. U.S. citizens may be
fingerprinted and photographed upon entry into Brazil. This
applies to holders of diplomatic and official passports, as
well as tourist passports.

7. Threat Assessment:

A. Political Violence-Terrorism: There are no indigenous
terrorist organizations in Paraguay. There are no political
groups or parties that are currently active in this country
that are specifically targeting U.S. interests. However,
given the presence of members of and support for extremist
terrorist groups in the tri-border region (Alto Parana and
Itapua Departments), visitors here cannot discount the
possibility of terrorist activity, to include random acts of
anti-American violence.

B. Crime: Paraguay is a high-threat post for crime. Petty
street crime in the city of Asuncion and the immediate
suburbs continues to be a problem for residents and visitors
alike. Visitors to the city of Asuncion should be aware of
problems with pickpockets or purse snatchers on the street
or on public transportation. Until recently, most crime
affecting visitors has been non-violent; aggravated
robberies, shootings, etc., while not completely unheard of
in Asuncion, were nonetheless uncommon. However, incidents
of armed robberies of businesses and residences by criminal
groups are occurring with greater frequency, and as a

result, it is recommended that due caution be exercised when traveling about the city.

18. The seasons in Paraguay are the opposite of those in the United States. Asuncion's climate is extremely hot from November through April and cool or mild in July and August. The transitional seasons, May - June and September - October are unpredictable: they can be pleasant or hot. Health conditions generally are good. The water in Asuncion is potable, and there are few reports of intestinal or stomach problems. There is no endemic hepatitis or malaria in Asuncion although outbreaks of dengue fever are recurrent.

19. As of 10/24/2005 the exchange rate is 6,090 guaranies to one US dollar. Personal Finances: Official travelers may cash personal checks at the Embassy for amounts up to US\$ 750.00 per week; and use their ATM cards at one of the many terminals located throughout the city. Because of restrictions with the embassy bank, ABN-AMRO, traveler's checks may only be cashed with one of the local exchange houses.

10. Laptops, Personal Digital Assistants (PDA)Pilots, cellular telephones and other electronic devices: Laptops and PDAs may not be brought into the Embassy without the prior approval of the Regional Security Office. Personally owned laptops, PDAs may not/not be used in the Embassy. USG-owned laptops may only be used in Controlled Access Areas (CAA) if the user certifies that the computer has been continuously under the personal control of a cleared American throughout transit. If this requirement is not met, the laptop can only be utilized outside of the CAA. USG-owned PDAs are under the same restrictions as cellular phones and other electronic devices, and may not be utilized within the CAA.

11. Security Clearance: State Department policy requires that all official visitors verify their security clearances, in writing, with the RSO in order to have unescorted access to the Embassy. Visitors whose clearances are not verified must be escorted at all times. TDY'ers must schedule a security in briefing with the security office as soon as possible after arriving at post. Access badges will not be issued until the employee has acknowledged receipt of the required security briefing.

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